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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 07-01)

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>21 February 2002</u>.

2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.   2b) ☐ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) <u>1-25</u> is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) <u>22 and 23</u> is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) <u>1-21,24 and 25</u> is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on <u>23 November 1999</u> is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☒ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

    If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

    a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ .

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) ☐ Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

2.   Claims 1-17, 20, 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Laor (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,069) and further in view of Gabber et al

(U.S. Patent No. 5,961,593).

3.   In re claim 1 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text a registration function to

register a user as a club member (column 2, lines 14 - 21 & 26 - 32; column 4, lines 5 –

14); a credential creation function to create a value token associating a club member

with a benefit provided by the at least one affiliate of a club manager (column 2, lines

14 - 21; column 3, lines 14 – 21); cryptographically signing the value token to create a

credential (column 2, lines 18 - 21; column 2, lines 41 – 45); communicating the

credential to the at least one affiliate for fulfillment of the benefit (column 2, lines 13 - 21;

column 4, lines 20 – 29).

4.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the

credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the

anonymous club member.

5.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to

a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a

network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

6.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

7.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

8.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-

58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site

(Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the

value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant

application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by

collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site

without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have

been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the

method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of

direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate

for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

9.   In re claim 2 Gabber et al. shows in figures 1-6 and related text a credential

storage function to store information associating a club member with a value token and

benefit (column 7, line 34 - 39).

10.   In re claim 3 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the

following; a membership number, a random number, a billing number, personal

information about the user, a user-selected password, time-stamp information (column

4, lines 5 - 14; column 5, lines 54 – 57).

11.   In re claim 4 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the

following; a prize, a product discount, a service discount, free goods, free services,

access to content, goods or services not available to the general public (column 2, lines

53 - 60).

12.   In re claim 5 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text the club manager comprises a web site (column 3, lines 52 - 56; column 5, lines 62 – 64).

13.   In re claim 6 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text a credential verification function to receive a credential including a value token from a club manager (column 2, lines 14 - 21; column 2, lines 53 –60); the value token associating a user with entitlement to a benefit as a club member (column 2, lines 53 - 60); verifying the authenticity of the credential (column 2, lines 39 - 45); a benefit provision to provide a benefit to a club member if the value token is valid (column 2, lines 39 - 45).

14.   Laor fails the show the user is an anonymous club member; the affiliate receives the credential directly from the club manager.

15.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

16.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer

the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

17. Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

18. In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site (Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

19.   In re claim 7 Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, the affiliate

further comprises a credential database to store credentials for completed transactions

of provision of benefits (column 6, line 59 – column 7, line 18). Wherein it is noted that

the affiliate credential database contains the site-specific user identifiers that allow the

user to access customized information.

20.   In re claim 8 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the

following; a prize, a product discount, a service discount, free goods, free services,

access to content, goods, or services not available to the general public (column 2, lines

53 - 60).

21.   In re claim 9 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text the affiliate comprises a

web site (column 3, lines 52 - 56; column 3 lines 62 – 64).

22.   In re claim 10 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text a club manager to

register a user as a club member (column 2, lines 14 - 21; column 4, lines 5 – 14); a

value token associating a club member with entitlement to a benefit (column 2, lines 14

- 21; column 3, lines 14 – 21); cryptographically signing the value token to create a

credential (column 2, lines 18 - 21; column 2, lines 41 – 45); at least one affiliate to

receive the credential from the club manager to verify the authenticity of the value token

of the credential (column 2, lines 36 - 45); providing the benefit to the club member if the

value token is valid (column 2, line 39 - 45).

23.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the

credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the

anonymous club member.

24.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

25.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

26.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

27.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the

value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize

returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-

58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site

(Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the

value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant

application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by

collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site

without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have

been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the

method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of

direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate

for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

28.   In re claim 11 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text the club manager and at

least one affiliate are web sites (column 3, lines 52 - 56; column 3 lines 62 – 64); at

least one server and a network for coupling a club manager to at least one affiliate

(column 3, lines 31 – 49).

29.   In re claim 12 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text registering the user as a

member of a club (column 2, lines 14 - 21; column 4, lines 5 - 14); creating a value

token associating the club member with entitlement to a benefit (column 3, lines 13 –

21); cryptographically signing the value token to create a credential (column 2, lines 14 -

21; column 3, lines 14 – 21); communicating the credential to the at least one affiliate

(column 2, lines 14 – 18).

30.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the anonymous club member.

31.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

32.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

33.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

34.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site (Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

35.   In re claim 13 Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, using the value token previously created for a club member and benefit when the benefit has been obtained by the club member (column 7, lines 4-7).

36.   In re claim 14 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the following; a membership number, a random number, a billing number, personal information about the user, a user-selected password, time stamp information (column 4, lines 5 - 14; column 5, lines 54 – 57).

37.   In re claim 15 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the

following; a prize, a product discount, a service discount, free goods, free services,

access to content, goods or services not available to the general public (column 2, lines

53 - 60).

38.   In re claim 16 Gabber shows, in figures 1-6 and related text sending the

credential to at least one affiliate as a link implemented in dynamic hyper-text markup

language (column 8, lines 12 – 16).

39.   In re claim 17 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text receiving a credential

signed by a club manager, the credential including a value token associating a club

member with entitlement to a benefit (column 2, lines 14 - 21;column 2, lines 53 – 60);

verifying authenticity of the value token (column 2, lines 16 - 21); a club member

requesting information from a server wherein it is inherent that in order to request

information from the server the client must provide an indication to the server as to what

information he desires which thus shows obtaining from the club member information to

complete a benefit transaction (column 4, lines 52 - 53); providing the benefit to the club

member when the value token is verified (column 2, line 39 - column 2, line 45).

40.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the

credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the

anonymous club member.

41.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to

a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a

network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

42.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

43.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

44.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-

58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site

(Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the

value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant

application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by

collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site

without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have

been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the

method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of

direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate

for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

45.   In re claim 20 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text at least one of the

following; a membership number, a random number, a billing number, personal

information about the user, a user-selected password, time-stamp information (column

4, lines 5 – 14; column 5, lines 54 – 57).

46.   In re claim 24 Laor shows, in figures 1-5 and related text, an IBM PC compatible

operating system where it is inherent that an IBM PC is an article comprising machine

readable medium having a plurality of machine readable instructions, wherein the

instructions are executed by a processor (column 3, lines 50 – 52); the instructions

allow a user to obtain a benefit from at least one affiliate because the user is a member

of a club in an electronic commerce system (column 2, lines 14 – 18); registering the

user as a member of a club (column 2, lines 14 - 21; column 4, lines 5 - 14); creating a

value token associating the club member with entitlement to a benefit (column 3, lines

13 – 21); cryptographically signing the value token to create a credential (column 2, line 14 - 21; column 3, lines 14 – 21); communicating the credential to the at least one affiliate (column 2, lines 14 – 18).

47.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the anonymous club member.

48.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member (figure 3).

49.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

50.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

51.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site (Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

52.   In re claim 25 Laor shows in figures 1-5 and related text an IBM PC compatible operating system where it is inherent that an IBM PC is an article comprising machine readable medium having a plurality of machine readable instructions, wherein the instructions are executed by a processor (column 3, lines 50 – 52); the instructions

coordinate provision of a benefit by an affiliate to a member of a club controlled by a

club manager in a electronic commerce system (column 2, lines 14 – 18); receiving a

credential signed by a club manager, the credential including a value token associating

a club member with entitlement to a benefit (column 2, lines 14 - 21; column 2, lines 53

– 60); verifying authenticity of the value token (column 2, lines 16 - 21); a club member

requesting information from a server wherein it is inherent that in order to request

information from the server the client must provide an indication to the server as to what

information he desires which thus shows obtaining from the club member information to

complete a benefit transaction (column 4, line 52 - 53); providing the benefit to the club

member when the value token is verified (column 2, lines 39 - 45).

53.   Laor fails to show the user register as an anonymous club member; the

credential is communicated to the affiliate without storing of the value token by the

anonymous club member.

54.   Gabber et al. shows, in figures 1-6 and related text, in an analogous art related to

a system and method that allows a user to browse personalized server resources on a

network anonymously, a method of registering a user as an anonymous club member

(figure 3).

55.   It would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention to

include the method of anonymous registration of Gabber et al. into the invention of Laor

because anonymity prevents multiple sites from colluding to combine customer

information using user names and passwords and build dossiers on particular

customers (Gabber, column 2, lines 13-19). Additionally, it is important to note in the

invention of Laor it is not explicitly stated that personal data is collected from the user during the registration process, rather it is understood that during the process of communicating the credential to the affiliate via the cookie placed on the client computer the anonymity of the user is compromised. Thus in the invention of Laor, once the cookie placed on the user computer is replaced with a method that allows the credential to be directly transmitted to the affiliate, as discussed below, the user's anonymity is maintained.

56.   Gabber et al. also shows a method of communicating a credential to an affiliate without requiring the anonymous club member to store a value token (column 11, lines 15-54).

57.   In Laor, the credential is communicated to the affiliate in the form of a cookie stored on the user's computer. The value token contains information entitling the user to "a coupon" (Laor, column 2, line 1- 21) that modifies a transaction. In Gabber the value token takes the form of data identifiers that allow server sites to recognize returning users and provide personalized service to them (Gabber, column 11, lines 56-58). These identifiers are transmitted directly from the proxy site to the server site (Gabber, column 7, lines 7-11). Both the coupon and data identifier applications of the value token fall under the applicant's definition of a value token as defined in the instant application (page 7, line 22). Further, cookies may compromise a users security by collecting information about the user and transmitting that information back to a web-site without the user's knowledge (Gabber, column 2, lines 39-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of skill in the art at the time of the invention, to substitute the

method of using a cookie to transmit the value token to the affiliate with the method of

direct transmission of the value token from the club manager (proxy site) to the affiliate

for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

58.   Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laor in

view of Gabber et al. as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Barnett et al

(U.S. Patent No. 6,321,208).

59.   In re claim 18, Laor substantially discloses the invention as claimed, but fails to

show registering the value token as used after the benefit transaction is completed.

Barnett et al shows in an analogous art related to a method and system for electronic

distribution of product redemption coupons, in figures 1-26 and related text, registering

the value token as used after the benefit transaction is completed (column 5, lines 46 -

62).

60.   In certain instances an affiliate may want to offer a club member only one chance

to redeem a value token in order that the club manager may reduce costs incurred by

offering the benefit, thus it would be to the affiliate's advantage to register each token as

used after the benefit transaction is completed. Therefore, it would have been obvious

to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to register the value

token as used after the benefit transaction is completed in Laor as taught in Barnett et al

for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

61.   Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laor in

view of Gabber et al. as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Eggleston et al

(U.S. Patent No. 6,061,660).

62.   In re claim 19, Laor substantially discloses the invention as claimed, but fails to

show billing a club manager for a benefit provided to a club member. Eggleston et al

shows in an analogous art related to a method of and system for distributing and

redeeming electronic coupons in a computer network environment, in figures 1-26 and

related text, billing a club manager for a benefit provided to a club member (column 15,

lines 8 – 12). Billing a club manager for a benefit provided allows a club manager to

offer an incentive to a club member without financially burdening the affiliate offering the

benefit redemption. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill

in the art at the time of the invention to bill a club manager for a benefit provided to a

club member in Laor as taught in Eggleston et al for the explicit reasons discussed

herein above.

63.   Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laor in

view of Gabber et al. as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Barnett et al

(U.S. Patent No. 6,321,208).

64.   In re claim 21, Laor substantially discloses the invention as claimed, but fails to

show verifying the authenticity further comprises determining that the value token has

not been previously used.

65.   Barnett et al shows in an analogous art related to a method and system for

electronic distribution of product redemption coupons, in figures 1-10 and related text,

verifying the authenticity comprises determining that the value token has not been

previously used (column 5, lines 46 – 62). By determining a value token has not

previously been used a club manager or affiliate can reduce fraud and offer one-time

use value tokens. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to verify the authenticity by determining that the value token has not been previously used in Laor as taught in Barnett et al for the explicit reasons discussed herein above.

66.   Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-21, 24&25 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

67.   Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

68.   A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

69.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kimberly B Eaton whose telephone number is 703-305-3229. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm EST.

70. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trammell can be reached on 703-305-9768.

71. The Fax phone number for the UNOFFICIAL FAX for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 746-7240 (for informal or draft communications, please label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT").

72. The Fax phone number for the OFFICIAL FAX for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 746-7239 (for formal communications intended for entry).

73. The Fax phone number for AFTER-FINAL communications where this application or proceeding is assigned in (703) 746-7238.

74. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

75.

76. April 18, 2002

JAMES R. TRAMMELL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100